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Uranium firm ordered to keep Wyo. presence

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By The Associated Press

CASPER, Wyo. — American Nuclear Corp. must maintain a presence in Wyoming and carry on reclamation and monitoring at its Gas Hills site or risk violating federal law, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission said this week.

Company President William Salisbury said his firm doesn't have enough money to continue operations and will go out of business after nearly 40 years in Wyoming. The company has discharged its remaining four employees and is working to close its Casper office, he said.

American Nuclear was one of the first to produce uranium from Wyoming's Gas Hills. However, the NRC announced yesterday that it has directed American Nuclear to control its licensed site in central Wyoming and maintain a presence there.

The company's license "will not terminate until NRC determines that all applicable regulatory requirements have been satisfied," the agency said.

The license requires American Nuclear to conduct various activities at the site, including effluent and environmental monitoring, reclaiming waste tailings

from the uranium mill, employing a radiation safety officer and periodically reporting to the NRC.

"In addition, NRC regulations require a licensee to perform certain activities before termination of a license," the agency said. The NRC would have to determine that mill tailings have been disposed of properly and that a reasonable effort was made to eliminate any residual radioactive contamination.

American Nuclear could face criminal sanctions if the site is abandoned deliberately. "In addition, individuals who deliberately cause the licensee to be in violation of the Atomic Energy Act, NRC regulations or the license could be subject to individual civil enforcement actions and potential criminal sanctions," the NRC said.

American Nuclear must respond by May 27. Plummeting uranium prices caused American Nuclear to cease production in the early 1980s. The company had reported a reduction in its debt and losses as recently as 1990.

But Salisbury said uranium prices didn't recover as expected, taking its toll.

The way I understand it Sunnyside is taking CDH to suit over CDH's position that seeps are point sources that need an NPDES permit. CDH may need EPA's support. They have already contacted Peggy Livings.

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Sunnyside takes dispute over closed mine's drainage to court

By The Associated Press

SILVERTON — Sunnyside Gold Corp. filed a lawsuit in San Juan County yesterday in a dispute with the state department of health over how to handle groundwater flowing through the closed mine.

The company began its final reclamation phase at Sunnyside Gold Mine above Silverton late last fall. The mine, the last of the

big hard-rock mining operations in the San Juan Mountains, shut down in August 1991.

Under a permit to reclaim it, Sunnyside has begun sealing mine tunnels with enormous concrete plugs. The operation is intended to force water draining from the mine to back up behind the plugs and flood the mine in five or six years, "creating equilibrium with-

in the mountain," forcing natural drainage around mine workings instead of through them, recreating natural flows of runoff and prompting re-emergence of springs and seeps on the surface. The health department says the new seeps and springs should be regarded as new mine discharges and pollution sources for permitting and treating purposes.

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